

**Economic Development Advisory Council**  
**8/19/09 Meeting minutes**  
**Americana Room – Hampshire Hills**

**Present:**

Rich Ball, Cirtronics Corporation  
Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co  
Heather Leach, Centrix Bank  
Tom Sapienza, Hampshire Hills Sports Club  
Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc

Rosie Deloge, School Board representative  
John McCormack, TIFD representative  
Bill Parker, Director Community Development  
Mike Putnam, BOS representative  
Janet Langdell, Planning Board representative

Shirley Wilson, Recording secretary

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T. Sapienza called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

**Minutes:**

M. Putnam made a motion to accept the minutes from 6/17/09 as presented. H. Leach seconded and all in favor.

**Follow up of BOS meeting 7/13/09:**

Tom Sapienza said that the Board of Selectmen, at their meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup>, unanimously recommended to form an Economic Development Council and basically our charge right now is to come back to with a membership roster, subcommittees, and an initial charter. T. Sapienza suggested keeping things more informal initially. R. Ball agreed saying that the formality can come later, if we're successful in going forward, we can keep track of what worked and what didn't work. J. McCormack referenced the TIFD committee saying that would be a good model as it functioned fairly well and we did not put a lot of structure in place right off the bat. B. Parker added that the TIF District by-laws were very simple and worked well for that group. D. White referenced the Community Facilities Committee set up and said that the consensus out there is that the group has been very powerful.

D. White said what we have done so far has gotten the attention of town departments, employees and department heads. They are reading the minutes of these meetings and he has been contacted by a couple of town employees who would like to sit down with this group to discuss where they fit in and what we are looking for. Maybe representatives from the Fire Department, Building Department and DPW could meet with us so we could get their take on the economic development, and especially in these present economic times they could hear what our take is, as an economic group. There are still some negative vibes out there and everyone needs to pull together. B. Parker said he saw that as an important next step. Perhaps that would be something the policies and procedures group would orchestrate. J. McCormack noted that it should be coordinated with Guy.

T. Sapienza said at both the meeting here with Guy and at the Selectmen's meeting, he was challenged for specifics in terms of what the problems were and felt hung out to try like this was his own agenda. So the other committee members need to be prepared to get Guy some specifics. D. White said he was one of the people who brought up specifics in these meetings but again, if he discusses those things, it will hang some people out to dry as well possibly affect him because he has to do business in this town as a developer. So he has to be cognizant of what to say and what not to say and respect the wishes of others. A lengthy discussion on third and fourth and information followed. J. McCormack said it will be good to look at the policies and procedures because often there is misunderstanding or miscommunication that gives rise to these kinds of issues. We need to make sure that policies and procedures are in place, are not overlapping, not conflicting, well documented, well understood and well conveyed to all parties on both sides.

M. Putnam said we don't want to come off as a watchdog and described the water problem with the Ciardelli project. He called the Water Department to turn the water on after all the plumbing was in and they didn't even have an application. So Matt had to scramble to get the paperwork done and write checks. That building has been in progress for months now, so why didn't that paperwork come in with the permit? It's the little things that need to be addressed and there definitely needs to be some diplomacy as to not be critical.

B. Parker said we need to get this group's message out and made reference to last night's Planning Board meeting. M. Ciardelli inquired how much of a pulse the Selectmen or department heads kept on the Planning Board meetings. Last night, as an observer, he watched a developer have to defend a subdivision plan with a road that met the ordinance in width and grade, yet three of the seven members couldn't vote to pass the application because their personal opinion was that it was unsafe. B. Parker said traditionally the Selectmen haven't gotten too involved with what other boards are doing and that is certainly another area to address, but also said that he didn't know if we'll ever get past board members voting their conscience. That was a real struggle last night and he provided some background for the committee. The problem referenced a new subdivision in town that met the requirements of the new Development Regulations which went through town review about a year ago that changed some of the road standards. The new standards are more environmentally sensitive and use less resources allowing narrower road widths and steeper grades depending on traffic and use. There was a breakdown in the review process internally where some of the review comments didn't get back to the Planning Board in a timely manner and this brought everything to a standstill in July. There was a difference of opinion between DPW versus the town's requirements and issues came out at last night's meeting about added time delays and expenses and the breakdown in communication, so this was a perfect example of what we need to solve.

M. Putnam said anything this committee does will need to go through go through Guy Scaife to follow that chain of command and go through the proper channels. Again we don't want to become the town watchdog or get confrontational, but we should come up with a comprehensive list of what we see wrong. We should give specifics such as the paperwork with the Ciardelli water connection and the Planning Board meeting last night. B. Parker said we may want to meet with Guy first because there will be some defensiveness.

H. Leach said we should convey that we are trying to help and educate. We need to bring up what is working as well as what is not working, because when we look at both aspects, we will begin to see patterns. She has found that typically some of the larger developers are ok, but we should look at the local businesses that have gone through the process to see what their experience was. She then referenced Humble Pie and said she has not heard of any problems with their recent move, but really she didn't hear anything about the move. We need to be cognizant of who it works for and what parts are working. Sometimes if we are only focused on what is not working we will lose perspective and possibly alter what does work. T. Sapienza said Heather raises a good point and that was mentioned in our initial meeting with the BOS. There is a lot of good in town, but our charge is to look at what needs to be addressed. Mike also has a good point in that we don't need to give specific names, but we do need specific examples and situations although there is a fine line regarding some of these issues.

R. Ball read the charge and said we should reflect on what our goal is. The key will be to know what is going on and proposed that we have an official representative on every town group to attend meetings and report back to subcommittees or the entire group on the successes or problems encountered. We could then process that information or pass it along to the Selectmen, but the only way not to be reactionary is to know what is going on; have a tentacle attached to the other groups. Secondly, we should eliminate all secondhand information because a squeaky wheel can cause a lot of misdirection. M. Putnam said he didn't think we have to get into that depth and said that our charge is to identify the problem and bring it to the right people. R. Ball said although bad things happen, it may or may not be a trend so we have to get a feel for the situation before we just pass problems along. T. Sapienza agreed that we will have to differentiate between trends and individual issues but asked if the same thing would be accomplished by subcommittee members reviewing and reading the minutes from the various boards and committees and then reporting back to the whole group? J. McCormack said that we shouldn't put ourselves in the role of monitoring other groups and we don't want to be the town watchdog. D. White said the paramount the thing to keep in mind is economic development; for the department heads, for the Selectmen, for the boards, for the town employees and for the businesses. What can we do and how can we promote economic development in these times and not get too involved in town operations.

T. Sapienza referenced the website as a good example and said he sensed concern at the last Selectmen's meeting regarding redevelopment of the website; however, we met with Dave afterwards and he felt more comfortable with the role of this committee. H. Leach added that after Dave looked at the websites that Tracy and Brad gave him, he saw this group more as a resource. T. Sapienza said this was a good example of an opportunity to use the EDAC as a resource. We can build off this and policies and procedures will be the biggest hurdle. M. Putnam said some of the items have already been brought to Guy's attention and some changes have already been made, so we might want to observe that.

R. Deloge stated that we now have one location in town where meetings could be televised live for cable and soon to be two. Could we figure out how to use those facilities and televise these meetings? She brought up the Ciardelli water issues and said there was difficulty somewhere along the line in someone forgetting the application, and we can help clarify what the real question is. We're not saying someone in the Town messed up, or that Matt did not do what he was supposed to do, just that there is an issue that should be addressed. We have to not be afraid to encourage individuals to sit with Guy or a specific individual. We don't have to mention names, but we need to make an effort to get us out of a place where people come to us instead of going to the appropriate parties. Television will give us the publicity for people to see what we are trying to do and that we are trying to work with everyone. T. Sapienza said he did not feel that comfortable with this group making the decision, and that being televised should be a BOS decision. Some of the issues are sensitive and may not be raised if televised. A lengthy discussion on minutes versus television followed. R. Deloge reiterated that we have this venue and we should reach a point where we are not afraid to use it. J. Langdell agreed saying public education is a good benefit. People watch at all hours of the day and night and they are learning things. As we evolve and progress to having quarterly meetings it may be good for the group meetings to be televised. However, it may not be appropriate to televise worksessions of the subcommittees. T. Sapienza agreed saying that was a good point. The subcommittees will go through all the nitty-gritty, massage the issues down and make a presentation to the larger group and educate the public that way. J. Langdell added that if there were a delicate situation or major issue that could damage somebody's reputation we could go into non-public session per the State statutes. There are mechanisms in place to facilitate this. T. Sapienza said this is certainly something to take under consideration.

**Membership recommendations:**

Bill Parker noted that Tim O'Connell wanted to be informed but does not have the time right now to be on the formal committee and could be involved as a consultant on subcommittees. George indicated in an email that he would like to stay on and Sean Trombly would also like to stay involved, but is busy with the farm right now. D. White said that Brad Chappell indicated his intentions to stay on the committee. R. Deloge noted that she was here at the request of the superintendent and will have to go back to him to have discussion on the matter. R. Ball said he has personal commitments as a representative of the BIA and limited availability so he would happily volunteer for a one year slot.

After some discussion it was determined that the following groups would be represented;

Board of Selectmen – Mike Putnam  
Planning Board – Janet Langdell  
Conservation commission – Chris Costantino  
Tax Increment Financing District – John McCormack  
School Board – Rosie Deloge  
Do-it – Tracy Bardsley

There would also be nine (9) members representing a cross section of economic interests in town and the business community: George Infanti, Dale White, Matt Ciardelli, Heather Leach, Sean Trombly, Brad Chappell, Rich Ball, Tom Sapienza and a representative of the real estate profession.

B. Parker will send an e-mail to all of the council members for their top choices of subcommittees to volunteer on as well as their choice for a term limit.

B. Parker asked if there were any suggestions for a representative from the real estate field. After much discussion on residential versus commercial the following names were suggested: Bob Kokko, Nancy Hebert, Penny Seaver,

and Karl Norwood. It was decided that local would probably be better and Heather would invite Penny Seaver to join this council. B. Parker said Penny has a lot of energy and can make things happen. Nancy would be the second choice. T. Sapienza added that the subcommittees could always bring in non EDAC members as resources such as Karl Norwood or his son.

D. White recommended Matt Ciardelli for vice-chairman and Tom Sapienza for chairman. Both individuals accepted the positions. M. Putnam made a motion to officially nominate Tom Sapienza as chairman and Matt Ciardelli as vice-chair of the Economic Development Advisory Council. R. Deloge seconded and all in favor.

**Council structure:**

Subcommittees would be formed as needed and will meet weekly or bi-weekly depending on the topics discussed; land use and zoning would meet more frequently for a period of time and then monthly for the rest of the time. The website subcommittee would probably end once the website work is completed while other subcommittees might become permanent committees. Subcommittees set up their own formal time limits for the meetings and will also select their own chairmen. The council's general meetings could be held at sixty (60) or ninety (90) day intervals, at which time the subcommittees would report back with their progress and findings and we in turn would bring the information or recommendations to the Select Board in quarterly progress reports. Subcommittees and membership could be re-evaluated annually.

T. Sapienza said that there was consensus at the last meeting in identifying the three areas for subcommittees; land use and zoning, policies and procedures and the website. J. McCormack added that there should also be an ongoing outreach group that can visit local businesses.

T. Sapienza stated that we have to be careful with people coming to this group and reiterated that this committee's role should be to direct people and inquiries to the appropriate departments or individuals.

B. Parker said zoning changes will be coming up soon and the Planning Board is about to start that process for the upcoming March ballot, so that subcommittee could probably meet with the Planning Board at one of their worksessions in September.

**Other business:**

It was the consensus of the committee to change the general meetings to Tuesdays.

**The next meeting was then scheduled for Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am.** This will allow time to coordinate membership and the subcommittees.

R. Deloge distributed copies of the Ten-year School District Report and explained that the front part was the ten year review and back section was the typical annual review. She would be happy to distribute additional copies, if requested.

J. McCormack asked Bill to follow up on the Grubb & Ellis marketing of the Brox property as it was mentioned that they have pulled out of several properties in Milford.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02AM.